

Mansfield YSB Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 11, 2006
12 Noon @ UConn
Center for Community Outreach
Storrs, CT 06269

In attendance were: Gina DeVivo-Brazeau, Outreach Coordinator, Center for Community Outreach, UConn; Tom Miller, UConn/Resident; Ethel Mantzaris, Resident/Chairperson; Kevin Grunwald, Director, Department of Social Services, Town of Mansfield; Shawnee Mason, Grade 8, Mansfield Middle School; Jake Hovanic, Grade 7, homeschooled; Brittany Cushman, Grade 7, Mansfield Middle School; Pat Michalak, YSB Counselor; Homework Group Coordinator and UCONN CCO liaison, Janit Romaino, YSB Coordinator..

Regrets: Frank Perrotti, Eileen Griffin, Chris Murphy,

Agenda items included:

1. Presentation at UConn's Center for Community Outreach: Gina DeVivo-Brazeau, Outreach Coordinator for UConn's CCO has been the coordinator for two years. She oversees 8 transport vans and 3 program areas for the 1500 UConn students who elect to do community service. Gina is directly responsible for the Alternative Break Program and the 15 community partners.

These are three ways in which UConn students can perform community service:

a. The Saturday Programs of which there are 200-400 students currently involved. Students sign up on line each semester and spend 2-4 hours in soup kitchens, playing bingo or working at the Special Olympics events. Usually 30 – 60 sign up for "GO", the Saturday Program, a mini way for students to experience community service.

b. The Alternative Break Program also has 15 community programs. There are trips planned to Boston, NYC, Philadelphia, DC, New Orleans, and Mississippi. Students pay a small fee and work on issues such as homelessness, HIV etc. There are 400 – 500 students in this program and last year they volunteered 60 – 80 hours a semester each. A typical weekend similar to the one spent in Boston April 3rd was

Arrive at shelter	5pm
Serve dinner	6-8pm
Clean up	8-11pm
Sleep	11pm-5am
Walk Boston to	5am-8am
Count Homeless Individuals	

There were 150 in the Alternative Break Program this past weekend and 100 went to New Orleans to help with Katrina issues over Spring Break.

c. The Semester Program: There are 30 semester long programs in which students can be involved and each program has a student leader. The Homework Group which Pat Michalak coordinates, has 15 UConn students from this #3 program. Ben Albert is the Student Coordinator. Ben recruits and trains the students and is the liaison to Pat. Each UConn Student helps a Mansfield student with homework on Tuesday evenings and then meets with the entire group of UConn students after each session. The YSB is hosting an appreciation Dinner for the UConn students and the Homework Group parents are cooking the meal. It is planned for Tuesday, April 18th, 6-730pm.

UConn supports its Community Service Programs with financial backing. Kevin Grunwald asked if UConn had thought about mandated Community Service and Gina said that when Community Service is mandated, it loses the motivation in the process. The students have an Executive Board and these members meet and advise the office about program goals, wish list, trends, etc.

Some professors have a service learning component to their classes. Prof. Ratcliffe has this "twist" in a urban setting and Gina and Tom Miller hope that more faculty would require service learning.

There are other ways in which students can be involved: such as the AIDS walk with WRCC. St. Thomas trips to Haiti and 3 cycle trip to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. There are summer opportunities the Hole in the Wall Camp, and/or at the Habitat for Humanity. The general consensus was that UConn provides many avenues and opportunities for students for service learning, volunteering and mentoring.

2. Update

The following activities that occurred in March 2006:

- a. PAWS/ERASE: Eleven Mansfield Middle School students attended the 11th Annual Peers Are Wonderful Support Conference at Manchester Community College. Of the eleven, six of the students involved in the "Secret Life of Girls" DVD related their experiences in three workshops. The workshops were informative and entertaining for both the presenters and for the audiences. We rotated the six students in the presentations so that they were able to attend the other 11 workshops.
- b. Juniper Hill: The Intergenerational Bingo activity theme was "Wearing of the Green" for St. Patrick's Day. The attendance was the highest ever with over 60 participants. The breakdown of attendees is usually 1/3 residents, 1/3 parents, 1/3 little friends.
- c. Homework Group continues to be valuable for parents, students (6th, 7th & 8th grades) and UConn tutors. There are 10-15 from each grouping attending every week and the parent group has quite an identity of its own. Parents are able to call each other during the week and offer support/suggestions to each other.

- d. Special Education Parents Group continues to meet on the last Monday evening of each month. Participation is high especially when the 7th & 8th grade students prepare part of the dinner selection! The parents seem to enjoy the experience. We will be concentrating on the nuts and bolts of understanding the PPT (Planning and Placement Team) process for the next two months.
- e. DCF Training: Mandated Reporter Training via DCF (Department of Children & Families) was held. The statutes have been updated to include mandated reporting of children under the age of 12 left in vehicles.

Meeting adjourned at 1pm.
Respectfully submitted,

Janit P. Romyko
Secretary

JR/jr